

OUR MISSION

The promotion of scientific inquiry. We value science as humanity's most productive and reliable means of attaining knowledge. We believe that general scientific literacy is a boon to any society, and we wish to educate our communities on current scientific discussions and work.

The advancement of secular rights. Atheists and other non-religious demographics are much maligned, but little-understood by a large part of society; it is no wonder that many are still afraid to "come out" in public and personal spheres for fear of reprisal and rejection. We support the separation of church and state, and the right of all people not to be unduly discriminated against for their religious beliefs, or lack thereof.

The promotion of open discussion of religion. We believe in the necessity of a marketplace of ideas, essential for a pluralistic society's function. We believe that all people have the right to speak about their own beliefs, and that all ideas are subject to critical review. Too often, religious views are expressed in a public forum without a fair hearing of opposing evidence.

CONTACT & OTHER INFORMATION

If you're interested in joining us, please note our contact information below. Membership is free.

<http://www.indiana.edu/~secular/>

secular@indiana.edu

Our LISTSERV's name is secular-l. We also have a Facebook.com group, "Secular Alliance of IU."

We are an affiliate of the Secular Student Alliance. The mission of the SSA is to organize, unite, educate, and serve students and student communities that promote the ideals of scientific and critical inquiry, democracy, secularism, and human based ethics.

We are also a Center for Inquiry affiliate. The purpose of the Center for Inquiry is to promote and defend reason, science, and freedom of inquiry in all areas of human endeavor. The Center for Inquiry is a transnational nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that encourages evidence-based inquiry into science, pseudoscience, medicine and health, religion, ethics, secularism, and society. The Center for Inquiry is not affiliated with, nor does it promote, any political party or political ideology.

<http://secularstudents.org/>

<http://centerforinquiry.net/>



Council for Secular Humanism

Secular Alliance of IU

The Secular Alliance of IU is a group of students, faculty, staff, and other members of the Bloomington community who share a secular outlook. We strive to understand the world through science and reason, from a naturalistic perspective. We assert that the rights of human beings should be upheld because of the commonality of the human condition, and believe in promoting the separation of church and state.

<http://www.indiana.edu/~secular/>

WHAT DESCRIBES YOU?

Our members describe their personal belief systems in different ways. Here are just a few of the words that some members use:

- Atheism
- Agnosticism
- Freethought
- Skepticism
- Metaphysical Naturalism
- Humanism
- Objectivism
- Rationalism
- Logical Positivism
- Socialism
- Existentialism

Members of the Secular Alliance of IU do not uniformly adhere to a particular worldview or dogma; we not only have common values, but differing world-views, too.

Questions about Secularism

DOESN'T MORALITY DEPEND ON RELIGION?

No! Like everyone else, secularists consider themselves moral people and strive to be ethical in everything they do. The difference is not the presence or absence of one's morals, but the origin of them. As humans, our ability to reason about ethical problems is a product of our cognitive ability and social nature. As secularists, we trust in our ability to rely on logic and our own experiences to make decisions about our actions.

ISN'T SECULARISM JUST ATHEISM?

Not necessarily. While many of our members would characterize their secular belief system as synonymous with atheism, others prefer to use 'agnostic,' 'humanist,' or another term.

WHAT ABOUT AN AFTERLIFE?

Generally, secularists do not believe in an afterlife. This concept may seem scary, but consider that there are many times that we not conscious or aware of anything (before birth, during dreamless sleep, etc.). Resuming a calm non-existence is only natural, and it is nothing to fear at all.

There are even benefits to not believing in an afterlife: life becomes more precious. Our actions can be motivated not out of fear of eternal torture, but by the wonderful pleasure we feel when helping others and doing good deeds for oneself and for society.

ARE SECULARISTS JUST ANTI-RELIGION?

No; we recognize many redeeming qualities of religion and spirituality, but we do feel that blind faith poses a major problem for society, as it denies the pluralism and public discussion that drive progress and the democratic process. We

support religious tolerance, but we also believe religious claims should be evaluated with the same standards as everything else. We certainly don't expect to eliminate religion from the world.

WITHOUT RELIGION, WHAT'S LEFT TO BELIEVE IN?

Many things! Basic human rights, the scientific process, and the importance of reflective public discussion, for example.

DOESN'T SECULARISM INEVITABLY LEAD TOWARDS COMMUNISM, FASCISM, OR ANARCHY?

No. Secularists possess a wide spectrum of political beliefs; in fact, some of our most passionate disagreements are on political and economic matters. Members of our group identify with as widely divergent beliefs as socialism and objectivism.

ISN'T SECULARISM JUST ANOTHER RELIGION?

The difference between religion and secularism is considerable. The very definition of religion is the acceptance of the existence of a supernatural being or power, based on spiritual apprehension instead of empirical evidence. However, secularism is the absence of faith, religion, spirituality, or belief in the supernatural.

WHAT IF I AM QUESTIONING MY FAITH?

Many people question long-held beliefs, and many secularists even question their secularism. Questioning beliefs and coming to rational, reasonable conclusions is what we are all about; we invite you to come talk to us about your beliefs, whatever they may be, because we're always willing to listen.